

is in Lincoln's waiting room, which was later the Office of the President through Theodore Roosevelt. But Lincoln used to keep regular office hours with people that wanted a job in a post office or something, because he said he wanted to be reminded on a regular basis of what the daily concerns of people were, and he wanted the war to be over so everybody could be restored to pursuing those daily concerns.

So anyway, that's one specific, very big example of what I think the general rule is. You've got to understand your country's history, have some idea of your country's future, have a vision of where you want it to go, come up with a set of ideas and a good team, and just pursue it with all the energy and focus you can and

have a good time doing it. That's my advice. Don't forget the mission; don't forget who you work for.

Q. We're honor bound to break this off, sir, but we're very grateful for your time.

Q. Thank you very much for doing this.

The President. I've enjoyed it. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 11:25 a.m. in the Human Resources office at the Wyndham Palace Resort on December 11 but was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 12:01 a.m. on December 13. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk al-Shara of Syria. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Telephone Remarks to a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in Houston, Texas

December 13, 1999

Well, I'm glad I got to hear the last of B.A.'s speech, and let me say to all of you, I'm jealous of you. I wish I were there tonight. I had looked forward to being there very much, but I got quite sick with the winter flu, and I've got the Israelis and the Syrians coming in this week, and I have to be well for them. So the doctor said I couldn't get on the airplane.

So I wanted to call and just, first of all, thank all of you for honoring Lloyd and B.A. and for raising so much money for the Democrats in Texas. I think we're going to win the House back in the next election. And I'm doing everything I can to do my part.

But I also want to thank you because of the career and the public service of Lloyd Bentsen, that you honor tonight. Because there is a rea-

son we're trying to win the House back: because of the direction we want the country to take in the new century. And everything he has done in his entire career embodies that.

So Lloyd, I miss you, and I love you. And I love you, B.A. I'm sorry I couldn't be there. I'm sick I missed Ann Richards' jokes. [*Laughter*] And you all owe me a raincheck, just like I owe you one.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 p.m. from the Residence at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Lloyd Bentsen and his wife, Beryl Ann (B.A.); and former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas.

Remarks on the Lands Legacy Initiative

December 14, 1999

Thank you very much. Secretary Babbitt and George Frampton and all the members of our administration are glad to welcome the environmental leaders who are here today.

At the dawn of this century, Theodore Roosevelt defined America's great central task as "leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us." This is the vision

of environmental stewardship that has inspired our lands legacy initiative, the historic plan I unveiled earlier this year to protect America's threatened green and open spaces.

Two weeks ago I had the great honor of signing into law the funding for this lands legacy initiative. Although much of the news of that day concentrated on budget victories for education and public safety, it was also a remarkable day for the environment. With one stroke of the pen, we made it possible to add hundreds of thousands of acres to our children's endowment of natural wonders, places like New Mexico's Baca Ranch, home to one of North America's largest herds of wild elk.

Today I will be sending to Congress a list of 18 additional natural and historic sites we propose to protect with new lands legacy funding. Our list includes sections of Hawaii's Hakalau Forest, which supports hundreds of species of rare plants and birds. It includes critical habitat on Florida's Pelican Island, where Theodore Roosevelt established the Nation's very first wildlife preserve. It includes the birth home and burial place of Martin Luther King, Jr.

We now have funding to protect all these places. We have willing sellers, and we look forward to speedy review by the appropriate committees in Congress.

I'm also pleased to report on the status of yet another effort to protect the lands we hold sacred. A year ago I asked Secretary Babbitt to report to me on unique and fragile places that deserve to be protected as national monuments. This morning Secretary Babbitt presented me with his recommendation that I use my executive authority to create three new national monuments in Arizona and California and to significantly expand another in California. Each of the sites already belongs to the American people, and no land purchases would be

required. But giving these lands national monument status would ensure they will be passed along to future generations, healthy and whole.

The first of the proposed new monuments is located on the northern rim of the Grand Canyon, and it consists of stunning canyons and lonely buttes shaped by the hand of God over millions of years. The second, a desert region in the shadow of rapidly expanding Phoenix, is an archaeological treasure trove containing some of the most extraordinary prehistoric ruins and petroglyphs in the American Southwest. The third, off the coast of California, would encompass thousands of small islands and reefs that serve as essential habitat for sea otters and sea birds forced from the shore by extensive development. Finally, this proposal calls for expanding California's Pinnacles National Monument, the site of the spectacular volcanic spires and mountain caves.

Secretary Babbitt's recommendations come as a result of careful analysis and extensive discussions with local citizen, State and local officials, and with Members of Congress. And I will take them very seriously. I expect to make a decision on the sites early next year.

Like Theodore Roosevelt, I believe there are certain places humankind simply cannot improve upon, places whose beauty and interest no photograph could capture, places you simply have to see for yourself. We must use this time of unparalleled prosperity to ensure people will always be able to see these places as we see them today.

There is no greater gift we can offer to the new millennium than to protect these treasures for all Americans for all time.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 *December 14, 1999*

Thank you. Thank you, please be seated. At this moment, about all I can think of is merry Christmas. *[Laughter]*

Senator Rockefeller, Senator Collins, Representative Cardin, thank you all for being here. And Senator Chafee, thank you for being here,